

DECLARATIONS OF HEADS OF STATES.

RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 19 February 1901;—for,

"RETURN of the various OATHS or DECLARATIONS touching RELIGION which are made on their Accession to Power by the HEADS of the following STATES: GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, EMPIRE OF GERMANY, UNITED STATES, FRANCE, AUSTRO-HUNGARY."

Home Office,
23 May 1901.

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JESSE COLLINGS.

(Colonel Nolan.)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed.
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L O N D O N :
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1901.

RETURN of the various OATHS or DECLARATIONS touching RELIGION which are made on their Accession to Power by the HEADS of the following STATES: GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, EMPIRE OF GERMANY, UNITED STATES, FRANCE, AUSTRO-HUNGARY.

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

I.—Declaration made by the King, on his Accession, in the House of Lords, pursuant to section 1 of the Bill of Rights (1 W. & M. sess. 2, c. 2).

I, EDWARD, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous, and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me as they are commonly understood by English Protestants without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof although the Pope or any other person or persons or power whatsoever should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning.

II.—Oath with regard to the Church of Scotland, taken by the King at his first Council on 23rd January 1901.

I, EDWARD VII., King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, do faithfully Promise and Swear that I shall inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement of the true Protestant Religion, with the Government, Worship, Discipline, Rights and Privileges of the Church of Scotland as established by the Laws made there in prosecution of the Claim of Right, and particularly by an Act, intituled An Act for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government, and by the Acts passed in the Parliament of both Kingdoms for Union of the two Kingdoms.

SO HELP ME GOD.

EMPIRE OF GERMANY.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR AT BERLIN.

(No. 112.)

My Lord,

With reference to Your Lordship's circular of this series of the 4th of March, I have the honour to transmit a copy, accompanied by a translation, of a Memorandum which I have received from the Imperial Foreign Office as regards the Oath made on accession by the King of Prussia.

It appears from this Memorandum that the constitution of the Empire of Germany does not prescribe any form of Oath to be taken by the Emperor on his accession.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

ENCLOSURE in above Despatch.

MEMORANDUM.

(Translation.)

There is no provision in the constitution of the Empire for an oath regarding the constitution on the part of the German Emperor; nor does the constitution contain provisions respecting the making of a promise on oath or of other solemn declarations by the Emperor.

On the other hand, the King of Prussia, in accordance with Article 54 of the Charter of the Constitution for the State of Prussia, in the presence of the United Chambers of the Prussian Diet, makes a promise on oath "to keep the constitution of the Kingdom fixed and inviolable, and to govern in accordance with it and with the laws." According to this the constitutional oath of the King of Prussia contains no direct reference to the position of religion and of religious institutions in the State; but seeing that in the oath the maintenance of the constitution is promised, the observance of the fundamental principles regarding religion and religious societies as laid down in Articles 12, 13, and 14 of the Charter of the Constitution is also included.

The above-mentioned Articles run as follows:—

ARTICLE 12.

The freedom of religious belief, of forming religious societies (Articles 30 and 31), and of common private and public worship is guaranteed. The enjoyment of civil and political rights is independent of religious belief. No suspension of civil and political duties can ensue on account of the exercise of the freedom of religion.

ARTICLE 13.

Religious societies as well as ecclesiastical societies which have no corporation rights can only obtain these rights by special laws.

ARTICLE 14.

The Christian religion serves as a basis for those institutions of the State which have connexion with the exercise of religion, without prejudice to the religious freedom guaranteed in Article 12.

His Majesty the reigning Emperor and King, on June 27th, 1888, took the oath prescribed in the Prussian Constitution in the Speech from the Throne made before the United Chambers of the Diet, with the words:—

"I swear that I will keep the constitution of the Kingdom fixed and inviolable, and will govern in accordance with it and the laws. So help me God."

In the course of the Speech from the Throne, which will be found printed in No. 166 of the German Imperial and Royal Prussian Official Gazette of June 27th, 1888, His Majesty then said as follows as regards the treatment of religious creeds in general and the relations of the State to the Catholic Church in particular:—

"Following the example of my illustrious ancestors, I shall always regard it my duty to bestow my Royal protection on all religious creeds in my land for the free exercise of their belief."

"I have perceived with special satisfaction that the new political church legislation has led to the establishment of relations between the State and the Catholic Church and its spiritual Head in a manner acceptable to both parties. I shall endeavour to preserve the peace of the Church in the land."

UNITED STATES.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR AT WASHINGTON.

(No. 107.)

My Lord,

Washington, 24 March 1901.

In obedience to the instructions contained in Your Lordship's Circular Despatch of March 4th, I addressed an inquiry to the Secretary of State as to what oath or declaration with regard to religion was made by the President of the United States on his accession to office.

I have now the honour to enclose a copy of the reply I have received from Mr. Hay, from which it appears that under the Constitution of the United States no religious test is required as a qualification for the office of President. Mr. Hay gives the text of the Solemn Oath or Affirmation which is prescribed for the President of the United States to take before the entrance upon his office.

I have, &c.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

(Signed) PAUNCEFOTE.

Enclosure in above Despatch.

(No. 2115.)

Department of State,
Washington,

21 March 1901.

EXCELLENCY,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's note, No. 70, of the 18th instant, in which you state that His Majesty's Government are desirous of laying before the House of Commons information relating to the various Oaths or Declarations with regard to religion which are made, on their accession to power, by the Heads of certain States, and you ask to be furnished with the desired information so far as the President of the United States is concerned.

In reply, I have the honour to quote from Clause 3, Article VI., of the Constitution of the United States the following:—

“No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification of any office or public trust under the United States.”

The Oath or Affirmation taken by a President of the United States before the entrance upon the execution of his office is prescribed by the Constitution of the United States (Article II., section 1), and is as follows:—

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

I have, &c.

(Signed) JOHN HAY.

His Excellency
The Right Hon. Lord Pauncefote, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

FRANCE.

COPIE OF DESPATCH FROM HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR AT PARIS.

(No. 83.)

My LORD,

With reference to Your Lordship's Despatch, marked Circular, of the day before yesterday, I have the honour to state that, although I felt certain that no Oath is exacted from a newly-elected President of the Republic, I thought it as well to have official confirmation of my accuracy in this respect.

I therefore asked Monsieur Delbosé this afternoon whether a new President was obliged to take any Oath on assumption of office, and His Excellency replied that, having been present as a Cabinet Minister at the Election of Messieurs Casimir-Périer, Félix Faure, and Emile Loubet, he could assure me that on each occasion the new President had done nothing but receive the congratulations of his friends; and that, as a matter of routine, he sent his message to the Legislature as soon as possible without any further formality.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDMUND MONSON.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

AUSTRO-HUNGARY.

COPY OF DESPATCH FROM HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR AT VIENNA.

(No. 73.)
My Lord,

Vienna, 14 March 1901.

Is reply to Your Lordship's Circular Despatch of the 4th instant, requesting information in regard to the various Oaths and Declarations with regard to religion made on their accession by the heads of Foreign States, I have the honour to forward herewith copies and translations.

1. Of the form of the Oath which the next Emperor of Austria will have to take in virtue of Article 8 of the Austrian Constitution of 1867:

Your Lordship will remember that Austria had no constitution when the present Emperor ascended the Throne, and it appears that His Majesty then took no Accession Oath of any kind.

2. Of the Oath which His Majesty took as King of Hungary, and which his successors will take:

Your Lordship will notice that this contains an engagement to maintain the Churches of God, but these are mentioned in the plural and without any specification of creed.

The German texts have been kindly furnished to me by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I regret not being able to furnish a translation of the law of King Andreas II., referred to in the Hungarian Oath; but as that Sovereign lived in the commencement of the 13th century I think it better not to keep back my reply, in view of the fact that Your Lordship's question arises in connection with religious changes brought about so much later than the date of King Andreas' reign.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G.,
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. PLUNKETT.

Enclosure No. 1 in above Despatch.

(Translation.)

ARTICLE 8 of the STATUTE of DECEMBER 21st, 1867, respecting the Exercise of Ruling and Executive Power.

The Emperor on his Accession takes the Solemn Oath in the presence of both houses of the Reichsrath—

"To maintain the inviolability of the fundamental laws of the Kingdoms and Provinces represented in the Reichsrath and to rule in accordance with these and the common laws of the Empire."

Enclosure No. 2 in above Despatch.

TRANSLATION OF THE GERMAN TEXT OF THE OATH TAKEN BY THE KING.

We, Francis Joseph I., by the Grace of God, &c., as Hereditary and Apostolic King of Hungary and its Dependencies, swear by Almighty God, by the Virgin Mary, and by all the Saints of God, to maintain the Churches of God, the municipal liberties (Municipien) of Hungary and its Dependencies, as well as the ecclesiastical and lay inhabitants of those estates of every rank, in their rights, prerogatives, freedom, privileges, laws, in their ancient, good and approved customs; to see that justice is done to all; to maintain intact rights, constitution, and the legal independence and territorial integrity of Hungary and its Dependencies; to respect the laws of the late King Andreas II.—(with the exception of the Clause 31 of the laws beginning with the words:—"Quodsi vero nos" to the words "in perpetuum facultatem")—not to alienate nor curtail the dominion of Hungary and its Dependencies, nor whatever belongs to these countries by right and title, but as far as possible to increase and extend them; and that we will do all that we are justly able to do for the common welfare, glory, and increase of these countries. So help us God and all His Saints.

DECLARATIONS OF HEADS OF
STATES.

RETURN of the various Oaths or Declara-
tions touching Religion which are made
on their Accession to Power by the Heads
of the following States: GREECE, BIRMAN
and INDIAN, KINGDOM OF THAILAND, UNGARIA
SLOVAKIA, FRANCE, AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

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